

BUILDING A NEW NORTHGATE BRANCH LIBRARY, COMMUNITY CENTER & PARK
PRE-DESIGN KICKOFF MEETING RECAP
6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 21, 2003
Olympic View Elementary School, 504 N.E. 95th Street

50 people from the community attended this meeting to discuss their vision for the new Northgate Branch Library, Community Center and Park. The Seattle Public Library City Librarian Deborah L. Jacobs opened the meeting with welcoming comments and introductions of Greg Maffei, Library Board of Trustees vice president and steward for the new Northgate Branch Library; and Ken Bounds, Seattle Parks and Recreation Superintendent. Bounds described the opportunity for the project to be the “heart and soul” of the Northgate and Maple Leaf communities, and introduced Bruce Bentley, President of the Parks and Recreation Board of Trustees; Erin Devoto, Parks Program Director; Tim Motzer, Parks Project Manager for the Northgate project; and Maureen O’Neill, Parks Northeast District Manager. Jacobs then introduced Alexandra Harris, Library Capital Program Director; David Kunselman, Library Project Manager for the Northgate Project; and Bobbie Daniel, branch library manager for the Temporary Northgate Branch. During the course of the meeting, Jacobs and Bounds also introduced Jackie Kirn, from the Mayor’s office, who invited the public to comment regarding the Mayor’s Northgate Action Agenda; David Traylor, member of the Citizen Implementation Review Panel (CIRP), and CIRP steward for the Northgate branch; Claudia McCain, Library director of Neighborhood Libraries; Marilyn Sheck, Library director of information technology; Lois Fenker, Library director of technical and collections services; Lisa Richmond, public art project manager, Mayor’s Office of Art and Cultural Affairs; Carolyn Law, arts planner, Mayor’s Office of Art and Cultural Affairs; Bob Hull, Ron Rochon and Scott Wolf, from the Miller/Hull Partnership, the architects selected for the project, and their design team members Bob Shrosbee and Mark Brands, landscape architects with Site Workshop.

Jacobs explained the intent of this pre-design meeting was for members of the community to share their desires for the Northgate Branch Library, Community Center and Park. The library will be a new 10,000-square-foot branch developed in conjunction with a 20,000-square-foot community center and a 1.67-acre park. She described the meeting format and explained that the meeting would break up into seven stations, with Library and Parks staff and members of the design team taking comments and suggestions from those in attendance. The staff and design teams then introduced themselves briefly and gave an overview of their individual parts of the project. O’Neill spoke briefly about the new community center, as a safe and welcoming place for the entire community to gather. Motzer spoke about the park, as a multi-use outdoor space, and detailed some of the planned features, as well as the challenges presented by the topography of the site. McCain invited the attendees to provide input regarding what types of programs and services, traditional or untraditional, would best serve the community, and Sheck solicited input regarding programs and services related to technology, in addition to computers. Fenker emphasized that the collection will be all new library materials, including multimedia, and introduced Tom Horne, managing librarian for technical and collections services. Richmond spoke about the opportunities for art in the two buildings, the library and community center, and the fact that there is a good art budget for the project. Law invited the attendees to pick up copies of the art plan developed for the community centers, which provides a guideline for treating the community centers as a system, while maintaining the uniqueness of each. Wolf spoke next, stressing Miller/Hull’s commitment to creating a new heart for the Northgate/Maple Leaf community. He briefly discussed the next phase of the design process, developing the preferred site plan. Hull gave an overview of some of Miller/Hull’s experience with community projects and library design, and stated that their primary design mission is to utilize the park as the setting for the buildings, to integrate the inside and outside elements, and to emphasize the connection to Thornton Creek and the neighborhood. Shrosbee outlined the four distinct edges of the site, and the topographical features including the slope and the area along Fifth Avenue North East. Jacobs announced that the meeting would be breaking up into the stations, and people were invited to circulate around the room to each station and offer ideas and hopes for the new branch, community center and park.

The meeting then broke into seven sessions on the community center, park, library design, library collections,

library services/programs, public art, and the Mayor's Northgate Action Agenda. Those sessions yielded the following comments from members of the public on their hopes and dreams for the new Northgate branch, community center and park:

Community Center

- South Slope – minimize, emphasize access, neighborhood
- Make it a social center
- The plaza
- Multi-purpose program space
- Multi-use kitchen
- Maximize the park
- Art space
- Space for seniors
- Throw caution to the wind – bold design
- Storage – the more the better
- Kitchen like Miller or Bitter Lake community center's, with island & sinks for cooking classes & catering
- Urban – take advantage of parking lot for socializing & communicating
- Pedestrian orientation
- Underground & beam construction, maximize trees
- Maximize park
- Security is important
- Lighting: outdoor and around back side
- Paging system
- Compelling connection between buildings
- Enough electrical hookups, etc.
- Tai-chi
- Gym – stage, dances, speakers, don't make it look like a gym
- Auditorium
- Arts & crafts – why not clay, kilns, jewelry, wood shop
- Challenge the park programs & the spaces inside
- Explore issues more
- Auto reader board visible from street, with events displayed
- Transition down to Thornton Creek
- 105th Street safe way to walk from neighborhood
- Can bank be cut down?
- Two-story center? Take advantage of slope at 105th
- Storage in basement?
- Mechanical/janitorial in basement
- Climbing wall for kids
- Flip the plan
- Too much importance being put on Fifth Avenue
- Overpass for children – dangerous intersection
- Plan library expansion to the north
- Less parking allows more park
- Adv. C. for center as soon as possible
- Project plaza – transition-friendly
- Semi-enclosed, center reception area in library
- Transition between the two buildings – communal, friendly
- Weather-protected outdoor space
- Coffee area, vendor
- Sell tiles/bricks as fundraiser
- Use 1% for art to make focal point in plaza
- Amphitheater connected with plaza, civic space
- Use entire site
- Steps like at the Locks/Steps
- Fountain or water as a noise buffer
- Lots of natural wood
- Need a whole gym? Impact on youth, basketball
- Stage, more arts than athletics
- Kitchen area, social area for elders right nearby
- Programs for seniors that encourage socialization
- Multi-level parking later?
- Fireplace like Tukwila community center
- Mirrors for ballet, etc. in multipurpose room
- Community center should be light and bright
- Quilting group – room to quilt and display (locked)
- Art display space & bookshelves (locked)
- Trophy case (locked)
- Shower, locker room space
- Lobby furniture – durable, usable, kid-proof
- Near plaza – coffee bar with rollup window

Park

- Design with young children in mind – kid “flow” and safety are important
- More parking
- Amphitheater in park
- Central plaza should be more than circulation – make into a venue or “civic space”
- Library courtyard on south side of library
- Stormwater infiltration/recharge: parking lot, porous paving
- Is access possible as extension of North East 106th West, or other areas?
- Access up east slope to project
- Parking lot has multiple uses: community events, etc.
- Can parking lot be converted into parking structure below grade?
- How will safety considerations along Fifth Avenue be addressed, i.e. Frisbees, balls, etc.
- How will the plaza between the buildings be configured – safety may be an issue if it is too enclosed – after hours/night use especially
- Volunteer garden as an idea for planting the site
- Make a clean and green dump site
- How about a skateboard park – this would be an amenity for young people
- Fifth avenue needs ample sidewalk width
- Parking lot as a social spot, connection to building and site
- Remember this is an urban space, not suburban; pedestrian orientation
- Be bold! Be urban!
- Ensure that public/open spaces are visible and dynamic – this will attract others and make the design successful
- How do we interface with the Fifth Avenue improvements, and what are the impacts on this project?
- Flag & pole
- What are project costs/budget?
- Community center should not have a brutal back side that becomes a graffiti wall
- Water feature: interactive, kids
- Consider flipping the community center with park and library with parking lot
- Think about alternatives (Sea Street) for 105th – maybe not a typical street
- Playground – consider relationships with community center
- Safety at Fifth Avenue North East edge: children’s safety, throwing balls/Frisbees into traffic – railing at Fifth Avenue curb?

Library Design

- “Hurry up – we’re ready!”
- Flip community center and park
- Concern with graffiti on back side of community center
- Scale
- Buildings should appear special among future development
- Resolve “front door” & clear entry sequence for library
- Drop-off on Fifth
- Non-active uses in park
- Acoustic mitigation from park
- Covered area between buildings and in drop-off areas
- Easy handicapped access to pick-up zone (look at Shoreline library)
- Good sitelines between library and park (security and view)
- Urban solution
- Expose people to street – advertise events to passersby
- Storage/mechanical in basement/attic
- Consider green roof
- Adequate stair width
- Open secure connection from park to Maple Leaf neighborhood
- Computers (concentrated area)
- Include pedestrian/bike concerns
- Wireless connections
- On-line book subscription service
- Kids will want to visit all three – easy access
- Short-term parking for drop-off and/or brief browsing
- Contain children’s area (acoustical separation)
- Buildings to be traditional and/or have dignity (not like Target)

- Protected/secure connection between library & community center with possibility of shared spaces
- Control daylight to prevent glare, especially on south exposure
- Look at some natural treatment of

Library Collections

- Large print books
- Reference books for consumer & technical information, strong reference collection
- Travel books on other countries
- Books for kids
- Access to medical information
- Books on tape (cassette) for adults & children

- stormwater
- 12' sidewalk on Fifth is not adequate width
- Push back library off Fifth
- Consider pervious surfaces

- Books 24/7 (e-books), "look into the future"
- Materials to support homework assignments (up-to-date)
- Music CDs
- DVDs
- Interface with recreation center, books on sports & recreation
- Classic history, local history (watershed)

Library Services/Programs

- CD reader that will read books-on-CD – features for accessibility
- Listening/viewing stations
- DVD drives on computers
- Video studio area & camera to record
- Wi-fi access; provide client cards
- Lots of computers
- Clay Jenkinsen
- Reference
- Poetry readings
- Pedestrian/bike access, safety
- Good lighting at crosswalk
- Good, informative lectures
- Cookery class
- Booktalks/reviews/discussions
- Strong programs to serve deaf & blind

- community – focal point
- Programs on travel – telling about places people went
- Computers clustered so classes can be held
- Computer literacy for all populations & abilities
- Interactive spaces between library & recreation center – computers for fun in rec. center
- Cooperative advisory councils
- Community college-level classes on computers & other subjects; North Seattle Community College
- High school in mall – library for these students

Public Art (Library)

- Theme (not random works)
- Signature piece, or mini-sculpture park (with Seattle Art Museum)
- Identity for N/H, landmark
- Gathering environment
- Gallery – rotating work, community work
- Speaks to the Northgate community
- Create versatile civic space
- Stage & performances
- Interactive, tactile

- Realistic work
- Local artist (regional)
- Discrete sculpture
- Environmental themes
- History (Native, Pioneer, Natural)
- North Seattle Community College for history resource
- Thornton Creek connection
- Static Sculpture
- Enjoyed over time

- Outside
- Bold, gutsy, go for controversy
- Make people think
- For the future, look forward

Public Art (Community Center)

- Interactive on different levels
- Regional artist
- Water – environmentally friendly, interacts with both people & environment
- Use interior display cases for other artwork
- Good idea to focus on entry area
- Bold, gutsy
- Make people think
- Future looking, look forward
- Welcoming
- Big & safe for kids to interact with

Harris then spent a few moments having the highlights from each breakout session briefly summarized. She introduced Greg Maffei, the Library Board steward for the Northgate branch, who thanked the attendees for their participation and level of enthusiasm, and encouraged them to utilize the library comment forms. He mentioned that there would be another public meeting in about three months, at the end of the schematic design phase. Harris also introduced Bruce Bentley, Parks Board President, who also thanked the attendees for coming, and stressed that their input would influence programming at the community center. He thanked the attendees and invited them to pick up comment forms for the community center and park. Harris noted the meeting's comments would be shared with the Library Board, posted to The Seattle Public Library Web site at www.spl.org, and to the Parks and Recreation Web site at www.cityofseattle.net/parks. She concluded the meeting by asking people to send comments to Library staff or e-mail the capital program office at capital.program@spl.org. People can also contact Kunselman at 386-4096 or by e-mail at david.kunselman@spl.org, or Motzer at 684-7060 or tim.motzer@seattle.gov. The meeting ended at 8:30 p.m.